

PHIL 1000: Introduction to Philosophy

TuTh 1:40-2:55 pm, Columbine 325

Spring 2019

Professor: Jennifer Kling, PhD

Office Hours: TTh 10am-1pm; available by appointment (Columbine Hall 4057). During my office hours, I am available both in person and via Skype at jenhkling.

Email: jkling@uccs.edu

Phone (call or text during emergencies only!): 919-260-2719

Course Description:

In this course we will tackle six of life's big philosophical questions (which you might or might not already have contemplated to some degree). Throughout the class, we will be reading both historical and contemporary philosophical texts, with an eye to understanding what philosophers think about these questions and why. However, our efforts will not be merely an academic exercise where we will only study what others have thought. Instead, in this course you will be joining in an active and ongoing effort to better understand the world in all its complexity and our place in it.

This class fits into a broader program of liberal education, insofar as it seeks to question and grasp issues surrounding human nature, morality and ethics, the production of knowledge, the nature of reality, and the structure of political systems. It has no prerequisites and is designed for students with no background in philosophy, although students with a philosophy background are welcome. For students who are interested in continuing in philosophy, this course will provide a taste of the wide range of problems in philosophy, which will allow you to leave with a better understanding of which areas you would like to study in more detail in the future.

In this class, you will have to struggle with big concepts that you may not have engaged before, and you will have to work hard to succeed. Along the way you will come to better understand what philosophers do, how they do it, and why. That will entail using and refining your abilities to effectively think, argue, read, and write. In other words, in this course you are going to learn how to *do* philosophy, which is both difficult and rewarding.

Course Requirements:

Participation (10%): You will need to both do the readings and come to class in order to be successful in this course. If you don't do the readings, you'll be lost in class; if you don't come to class, you'll be lost in the readings and the assignments. While **excessive** participation is not required, some willingness to engage with both me and your fellow classmates is necessary— without this willingness on your part, we won't be able to have the sort of productive class discussions that will enable you to successfully engage in the course. So, while a lack of participation won't harm your grade very much, participation can significantly *help* your grade. ****Attendance is not participation! However, I do take attendance into account when determining your participation grade.****

I appreciate that speaking to a classroom full of your peers can be difficult; so, there are a number of other ways to participate in class. You may speak in class, you may engage in small group work, you may visit during my office hours, you may send me emails with questions, comments, and concerns, you may start online discussion threads, you may post relevant outside documents/videos/blogs, etc. to the course Canvas website, you may tweet and/or blog and/or journal about issues raised in class, etc. If you're unsure of whether some action counts as participation, please see me, and we'll discuss it.

Argument Reconstructions (5% each): You are required to submit **six** argument reconstructions throughout the semester. (5% each x 6 posts=30%)

Argument reconstructions are due by the start of the class period on the due date. **Late argument reconstructions will not be accepted.** They should be roughly ½-1 page in length, and should reconstruct the relevant argument. Argument reconstructions should be created in MindMup 2.0, and submitted via Canvas. If you wish to submit an argument reconstruction in some other form, please see me, and we'll discuss it. ****Collaboration is encouraged but not required. If you do collaborate with a classmate, each classmate must turn in a copy of the argument reconstruction.****

Papers (15% each): There are **three** required papers for this course. Each paper should be no longer than 2 pages, and should engage with some issue brought up in the course texts and class discussions. I will provide a list of topics one week in advance of each paper's due date. If you wish to write on a topic not on the list, please come see me to discuss your proposed topic. If you wish to submit a paper in some other form (podcast, video, tumblr, etc), please see me, and we'll discuss it.

Papers are due by the start of the class period on the due date. For every 24-hour period that a paper is late, I will take 5 points off. That said, I am aware that life happens; if you feel you need an extension, **please ask me as soon as possible.** The earlier you ask, the more likely I am to give you an extension. Failure to turn in any one of the papers will result in failing the course.

Final (15%): There is a required final exam for this course. The exam will consist of a series of short answers as well as (possibly) one longer essay. Failure to take the final exam will result in failing the course.

Grading Scale:

A: An 'A' denotes exceptional skill and ability. An 'A' student demonstrates an excellent grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the material enough to explain it succinctly and well), and also displays the ability to engage thoughtfully with both the broad issues and finer points under discussion.

A: 100-93 A-: 92-90

B: A 'B' denotes solid-to-impressive skill and ability. A 'B' student demonstrates a good grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the material well enough to explain it with few mistakes), and also displays the ability to engage thoughtfully with most, if not all, of the issues and points under discussion.

B+: 89-87 B: 86-83 B-: 82-80

C: A 'C' denotes adequate skill and ability. A 'C' student demonstrates a fair grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the big picture, but makes some serious errors in presentation), and also displays the ability to engage thoughtfully with at least some of the issues under discussion.

C+: 79-77 C: 76-73 C-: 72-70

D: A 'D' denotes inadequate skill and ability. A 'D' student has serious problems with grasping the material, and fails to engage thoughtfully with any of the issues under discussion.

D+: 69-67 D: 66-63 D-: 62-60

F: An 'F' denotes catastrophic problems in fulfilling the requirements of the course. An 'F' student neither grasps the material nor engages with it critically at any level. F: 59-0

While hard work is correlated with success, it is not sufficient for success. To get a good grade in this course, you need to not only understand and engage with the material, but also communicate your understanding and engagement to me via your participation, projects, papers, and exam. If you sense that you are heading towards a grade you do not want, please come see me as soon as possible (if you wait until the end of the semester, it will be too late).

Assignments:

All readings, videos, podcasts, etc can be found on this course's Canvas site.

Week 1: Introduction + What is Philosophy?

Tuesday, January 22nd Introduction to the Course *and* Course Contract

Thursday, January 24th **Watch:** "Plato's Allegory of the Cave," Phil Williams (narrated by Orson Welles)

Week 2: What is Philosophy continued + How to do philosophy: Mapping Arguments and Writing Papers

Tuesday, January 29th **Read:** Plato, *Apology* (selection)

Thursday, January 31st **Read:** Judith Jarvis Thompson, excerpt from "Self-Defense" and
Watch: 'A Sample Philosophy Paper' by Angela Mendelovici

Week 3: Who Am I?: Questions of Personal Identity

Tuesday, February 5th **ARGUMENT RECONSTRUCTION #1 DUE**
and
Read: John Locke, excerpt from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

Thursday, February 7th **Read:** Daniel Dennett, "Where Am I?"

Week 4: Personal Identity, continued

Tuesday, February 12th **Read:** Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism"

Thursday, February 14th **PAPER #1 DUE**
and
Watch: TEDx Talk, Amma Asante, "The power of defining yourself"

Week 5: What Should I Do?: Questions of Ethics and the Good Life

Tuesday, February 19th **Listen:** Philosophy Bites Podcast, "David Edmonds on Trolley Problems"

Thursday, February 21st NO CLASS: PROFESSOR OUT

Week 6: Ethics and the Good Life, continued

Tuesday, February 26th **ARGUMENT RECONSTRUCTION #2 DUE**
and
Read: Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

Thursday, February 28th **Read:** Onora O'Neill, "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems"

Week 7: Ethics and the Good Life, continued

Tuesday, March 5th **Listen:** Philosophy Bites Podcast, “William B Irvine on Living Stoically”

Thursday, March 7th **Listen:** Philosophy Bites Podcast, “Susan Wolf on Meaning in Life”

Week 8: Does God Exist?: Questions of Religion and Spirituality

Tuesday, March 12th **ARGUMENT RECONSTRUCTION #3 DUE**
and

Read: St. Anselm, excerpt from *Proslogion*

Thursday, March 14th **Read:** Marilyn McCord Adams, “Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God”

Week 9: Religion and Spirituality, continued

Tuesday, March 19th **Listen:** Hi-Phi Nation podcast, “The Name of God”

Thursday, March 21st **PAPER #2 DUE**
and

Watch: TED Talk, Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Is religion good or bad? (This is a trick question)”

Week 10: Spring Break

Tuesday, March 26th NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Thursday, March 28th NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Week 11: What is the World Like?: Questions about the Nature of Reality

Tuesday, April 2nd Discussion

Thursday, April 4th **Read:** Derek Parfit, excerpt from “Why Anything? Why This?”

Week 12: The Nature of Reality, continued

Tuesday, April 9th **ARGUMENT RECONSTRUCTION #4 DUE**
and

Read: David Lewis, “The Paradoxes of Time Travel” (selections)

Thursday, April 11th No reading assigned: Skype call with Dr. Janella Baxter

Week 13: How Do We Know?: Questions about the Nature and Production of Knowledge

Tuesday, April 16th **Read:** John Searle, “Minds, Brains, and Programs” (selections)

Thursday, April 18th **ARGUMENT RECONSTRUCTION #5 DUE**
and

Read: Descartes, *Meditations* I and II

Week 14: The Nature and Production of Knowledge, continued

Tuesday, April 23rd

PAPER #3 DUE

and

Listen: Examining Ethics Podcast, “Skepticism and the Skeptical Skeptics Who Use It”

Thursday, April 25th

Read: Robert Nozick, “The Experience Machine”

Week 15: How Should Society Be Organized?: Questions about Politics and Community

Tuesday, April 30th

Read: “Feminist Perspectives on Knowledge,”
Living Philosophy, edited by Lewis Vaughn

Thursday, May 2nd

ARGUMENT RECONSTRUCTION #6 DUE

and

Read: Ward Churchill, “Crimes against Humanity”

Week 16: Politics and Community, continued

Tuesday, May 7th

Read: Ronald Dworkin, “Taking Rights Seriously”

Thursday, May 9th

Read: Martin Luther King, Jr., “A Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Final Exam Week

Tuesday, May 14th

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 14, 12:40-2:40pm, Columbine 325

The Writing Center

The Writing Center at UCCS is a free resource available to all students. Students are encouraged to visit the writing center for writing feedback at any stage in the writing process. For information regarding their tutors, hours, location, or to utilize their online links and resources, please visit <https://www.uccs.edu/writingcenter/>.

Student Conduct

All students at UCCS are responsible for knowing and adhering to the conduct policies of this institution. For more information, please see the [Student Conduct Policies](#). Please obey the spirit as well as the law of UCCS's Student Code of Conduct. If you think that something is in violation of the Code, it probably is, so check before doing it. Regarding academic integrity, please remember that unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism, and so **you must cite all of your sources** for papers! Failure to cite your sources will cause points to be taken off of your papers.

****Please note: every assignment turned in for this class must be your own original work, produced specifically for this class. You may not turn in an assignment written for a previous and/or different class. To do so would constitute (self) plagiarism, and will be treated as such.****

Sex- and Gender-based Violence and Harassment

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, religion, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been

harassed or assaulted for **any** reason, you can find the appropriate resources here:
<https://www.uccs.edu/equity/resources>.

Military Deployment and Military Service

In order to assist students who are called to active duty the Campus has compiled a set of guidelines that include information on withdrawing from courses. General information can be accessed at:
<https://www.uccs.edu/military/current-students/active-duty-and-reservists/deployment>

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to register with Disability Services and provide them with documentation of your disability. They will work with you to determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. To avoid any delay, you should contact Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and disability accommodations cannot be provided until a Faculty Accommodation Letter has been given to me. Please contact Disability Services for more information at Main Hall room 105, 719-255-3354 or dservice@uccs.edu.

Students with Dependents

If you are a student with a dependent (such as a child, sibling, or elderly member of your household) and believe you will need accommodation for this class, please let me know, and I will work with you to determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. Dependents are welcome to attend class with you, so long as they do not unduly disrupt the normal functioning of the class.

Syllabus Changes

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as appropriate. The odds that I'll do so during the semester are small, but if I do, I will inform you as soon as possible.